

‘THE RINGWOOD FIELD NATURALIST’ CLUB NEWSLETTER



Issue No. 38 April, 2014

EDITORIAL: The middle Yarra Timelines season for February and March is known as Late Summer and this can be a time of considerable anxiety and stress as the countryside dries out and temperatures soar. This year, 7th February marked the fifth Anniversary of Black Saturday, one of the most significant fire events in Victoria's history. While the human inhabitants are still coming to terms with this catastrophe, as field naturalists we can take the opportunity to marvel at the extraordinary powers of renewal in the natural environment. Field trips have shown us how the regenerated areas have once again come into bloom and the variety of moths and butterflies have added to the spectacle of colour. As the season concludes with the first thunderstorm sweeping across the plains, the rains once more replenish our precious waterways.

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*Members working on plant identification
during the Club's Spring field weekend at
Lake Tyers in September 2013*

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PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

Campout Lake Tyers – 13-15 September 2013

Leaders: Alison and Peter Rogers

Twenty-seven members enjoyed beautiful weather for the weekend away at Lake Tyers. Most members arrived early and braved the icy winds to walk around the Lake Tyers beach and dunes.

The Saturday itinerary was to investigate Lake Tyers State Park and Colquhoun State Forest. Our first stop was at the east end of South Boundary Rd to enable members to get a feel of the bush. Here members were serenaded by a variety of birds and noted some of the flowering plants, especially the bright purple of *Indigofera australis*.

Driving through the bush to the Rainforest Walk parking area members either had morning tea whilst looking around the area or made a hurried trip to the rainforest area. Highlights here included a number of orchids and honeyeaters, especially the Scarlet honeyeater. A quick stop at Burnt Bridge Picnic Area enabled members to photograph a number of orchids including *Caladenia catenata* and *Lyperanthus suaveolens*. Lunch was held on the banks of Boggy Creek at Nowa Nowa with members enjoying the feeding Musk lorikeets in the cherry ballart.

The afternoon drive through the Colquhoun SF started with a visit to the Trestle Bridge, followed by a short visit to Costick's Weir. A couple of stops were made along the road to look at a stand of Yellow Pomaderris (*Pomaderris affinis*) and a stand of *Gompholobium huegelii* with a carpet of *Caladenia catenata* nearby. Afternoon tea was held before members walked to the Historic Granite Quarry site. Weary members then headed back to camp for our shared BBQ tea.

Sunday morning again dawned a beautiful day. The morning was spent meandering along the Nyerimilang Heritage Park walking tracks through bushland and along cliff tops. Numerous birds and some orchids were the main focus during the walk. A return to the Park gardens for a picnic lunch saw the end of the organised program for the weekend. After lunch some members had to pack up and return to Melbourne. Those staying on had an optional afternoon outing at the Log Crossing Picnic Area in the Colquhoun SF.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS (CONT)

Field Trip to Baluk Willam Flora Reserve and Birdsland -

29 September 2013

Leaders: David and Eeva Hewitt

19 Members enjoyed a beautiful sunny and very pleasant walk through two parts of the Baluk Willam reserve. We managed to find 13 orchids in flower and a few with prominent leaves which should flower within the following days or weeks. The orchids seen flowering are listed on page 7. We then moved to Birdsland for lunch and a brief walk around the lake where we saw a number of water birds including pacific and hard-head ducks, great and little black cormorants, male and female darters, coots and purple swamp hens, and a reed warbler.

Field Trip to Yea Wetlands - 19 October 2013

Leaders: Alison and Peter Rogers

Sixteen members travelled to Yea on a warm and sunny day.

The waterways in the Yea Wetlands were full and the grass had been freshly mown. Birds were the main feature of the morning walk with 34 species seen for the morning. A highlight was the number of Sacred Kingfishers within the wetlands as well as observing a pair of Sacred Kingfishers preparing a nesting hollow. Other highlights included Rufous whistlers serenading members throughout the walk, flocks of Red-browed Finches at every turn and a quick glimpse of a quail (possibly a Brown Quail).

Lunch was held back at the picnic area where Bell Miners chimed the entire time.

Most members travelled on to Seymour Bushland Reserve for the afternoon. This was a treat since other visits to this Reserve have either been abandoned due to rain or washed out early. The decision to visit was justified within a matter of metres from the car park with sun orchids, a purple beard orchid and a musky caladenia being discovered in the grass. A walk around the long track was rewarding with more orchids, especially a salmon sun orchid being found at the dam. Members had a good sighting of a Brown Gerygone. Back at the cars we settled down for a chat and a well deserved drink.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS (CONT)

Field Trip to Point Cook - 11 January 2014

Leader: Jackson Airey

21 members and 1 guest met at the RAAF Lake car park at the Point Cook Coastal Park on a cool and overcast morning. There wasn't much bird life around until a Spotted Harrier appeared patrolling the lake edge and most members got great views of this increasingly more common bird.

We headed to the main car park for the morning walk on the heathland and beach. Superb Fairy-wren were abundant and highlights were a Swamp Harrier, a few Golden-headed Cisticola and we lucked upon a family of Brown Quail - 2 adults with 5-6 chicks. Returning to the main recreation area, seeing another group of Quail on the walk back, the clouds began to clear and the sun warmed us up over lunch.

Heading to Point Cook for the afternoon walk we found yet another covey of Brown Quail in amongst the pine trees. A small flowering bush on the water's edge was humming with several bees including a Blue-banded Bee. Following the shoreline we made the Point then continued to the Homestead area, with several members doing some rock-pooling. We then headed back to our cars for afternoon tea and members departed.

Field Trip to Arthur's Seat - 16th February 2014

Leaders: Inta and Roger Needham

Eighteen members assembled at Seawinds near the summit of Arthur's Seat at 10am on a pleasantly cool, overcast morning following a consistently hot and dry summer. We drove about 3 km to the end of Seamist Drive and commenced a 2.8 km return walk to King's Waterfall from which first views to McCrae and the adjacent bay and later views to Rye and Point Nepean could be seen. A Wood Duck and a White-faced Heron were spotted on a dam before we entered a narrow bush lined track along the side of a deep valley. Cassinia, Sweet Bursaria and Hyacinth Orchids were flowering as were some of the Eucalypts. The southerly breeze made birdwatching difficult and although some birds were heard, few were seen.

The falls area was quiet as after 6 weeks without rain the falls had ceased to flow. A flycatcher was heard and much to our surprise a Rufous Fantail was spotted in a large Wild Cherry (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*).

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS (CONT)

Field Trip to Arthur's Seat (cont)

Large old Blackwoods (*Acacia melanoxylon*) were prominent along the track back to the cars and 3 species of butterfly – Common Brown and 2 Xenicas were seen in the more open areas.

Lunch was taken at the conclusion of the walk in the shade beside a grassy firebreak.

After lunch we headed by car to another part of the park, about 5km distant, where a track led to OC Dam. Initially the track is fairly flat with thick bush to the left and an orchard to the right. The bush was quiet at the start but before long we came across a hotspot with Thornbills, Grey Fantails, Pardalotes, Brown-headed Honeyeaters and Rufous Fantails flitting through the foliage. Further down the track a Bassian Thrush provided a point of interest and Broad-leaf Bitter Pea (*Daviesia latifolia*) was a conspicuous plant at the top of a steep slope.

The group headed back to the carpark for afternoon tea and birdcall, which marked the end of a pleasant, relaxing day and provided us with a number of interesting sightings.

Field Trip to Lake Mountain - 15 March 2014

Leader: Judith Cooke

Twenty-five members travelled up the Lake Mountain road to Gerraty's for the first excursion at Lake Mountain since January 2010. We walked up to the Snow Gauge, seeing several nice birds and a few late season flowers hanging on some plant species. Members were pleased to see the greatly improved condition of the vegetation on the plateau as we followed Echo Flat Trail via Helicopter Flat to The Camp. Mountain Gentians (*Chionogentias muelleriana*) flowering in the bog provided an attractive sight, and we saw numerous green grasshoppers and an Olive Whistler, which was a new bird for the Club's list there. The return walk along Snowgum Trail and back to the Snow Gauge provided more sightings of interest. We returned to the cars right on schedule and decided that due to the gale force wind sweeping the carpark, we'd relocate to Arnold Gap for some shelter while we had lunch. Afterwards, we did a short walk under a magnificent stand of *Eucalyptus delegatensis*, seeing one or two more birds, including a Hobby. We then gathered for a bird count in the picnic shelter at Cascades carpark, where the excursion concluded.

NATURE NOTES

Lake Tyers Weekend September 2013

BIRD LIST

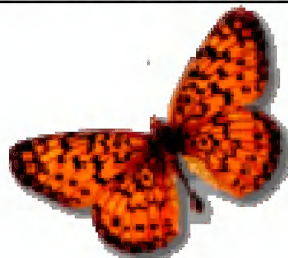
Satin Bowerbird	Grey Butcherbird	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo	Fantailed Cuckoo	Shining Bronze Cuckoo
Pied Currawong	Grey Currawong	White winged Chough
Masked Lapwing	Nankeen Night Heron	Eurasian Coot
Little black Cormorant	Little pied Cormorant	Great Cormorant
Wood Duck	Chestnut Teal	Grey Teal
Great Egret	Australasian Grebe	Hoary Headed Grebe
White faced Heron	Dusky Moorhen	Purple Swamphen
Royal Spoonbill	Pelican	Black Swan
Wedge tailed Eagle	White breasted Sea Eagle	Brown Goshawk
Whistling Kite	Brown Flycatcher	Straw necked Ibis
Sacred Ibis	Pacific Gull	Silver Gull
Crested Tern	Pied Oyster catcher	Bell Miner
Brown headed Honeyeater	White naped Honeyeater	Yellow tufted Honeyeater
Yellow faced Honeyeater	Eastern Spinebill	Crescent Honeyeater
Scarlet Honeyeater	White eared Honeyeater	New Holland Honeyeater
Lewin's Honeyeater	Little Wattlebird	Red Wattlebird
Laughing Kookaburra	Azure Kingfisher	Sacred Kingfisher (h)
Lyrebird (h)	Magpie	Magpie lark
White Cockatoo	Galah	Musk Lorikeet
Rainbow Lorikeet	Crimson Rosella	Long billed Corella
Little Corella	King Parrot	Crested Pigeon
Wonga Pigeon	Common Bronzewing	Olive backed Oriole
Spotted Pardalote	Striated Pardalote	Gang Gang
Spotted Quail-thrush	Forest Raven	Australian Raven
Eastern yellow Robin	Rose Robin	Grey Shrike-Thrush
White throated Treecreeper	Red browed Finch	Brown Gerygone
Brown Thornbill	Striated Thornbill	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
White browed Scrubwren	Mistletoebird	Silvereye
Grey Fantail	Varied Sitella	Rufous Whistler
Golden Whistler	Willie Wagtail	Superb fairy-Wren
Tree Martin	Welcome Swallow	Dusky Woodswallow
Whipbird	<i>Feral pigeon</i>	<i>Indian Myna</i>
<i>Spotted Dove</i>	<i>Blackbird</i>	<i>Starling</i>
<i>Goldfinch</i>		103 species

NATURE NOTES (CONT)

Lake Tyers Weekend September 2013 BUTTERFLIES	
Australian Painted Lady Saltbush Blue Meadow Argus	Australian Admiral Samphire Blue

Lake Tyers Weekend September 2013 ORCHID LIST		
<i>Caladenia catenata</i>	<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	<i>Chiloglottis valida</i>
<i>Diuris pardina</i>	<i>Glossodia major</i>	<i>Lyperanthus suaveolens</i>
<i>Pterostylis alpina</i>	<i>Pterostylis concinna</i>	<i>Pterostylis curta</i>
<i>Pterostylis melagramma</i>	<i>Pterostylis nana</i>	<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>
<i>Pterostylis pedunculata</i>		13 species

Baluk Willam Flora Reserve September 2013 ORCHID LIST	
Mayfly Orchid	<i>Acianthus caudatus (Nemacianthus caudatus)</i>
Pink Fingers	<i>Caladenia carnea (Petalochilus carneus)</i>
White Fingers	<i>Caladenia catenata (Petalochilus catenatus)</i>
Wine-lip spider orchid	<i>Caladenia oenochila (Arachnorchis oenochila)</i>
Mantis Orchid	<i>Caladenia tentaculata (Arachnorchis tentaculata)</i>
Common Bird Orchid	<i>Chiloglottis valida (Simpliglottis valida)</i>
Golden Moths	<i>Diuris chryseopsis</i>
Wallflower Orchid	<i>Diuris orientis</i>
Wax Lips	<i>Glossodia major</i>
Brown Beaks	<i>Lyperanthus suaveolens</i>
Trim Greenhood	<i>Pterostylis concinna (Tauranthus concinna)</i>
Tall Greenhood	<i>Pterostylis melagramma (Bunochilus melagrammus)</i>
Nodding Greenhood	<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>
Maroonhood	<i>Pterostylis pedunculata</i>
Rabbit's ears	<i>Thelymitra antennifera</i>
And about to flower Small Tongue Orchid - <i>Cryptostylis leptochila</i> , Large Tongue Orchid - <i>Cryptostylis subulata</i> and a number of sun orchids.	



NATURE NOTES (CONT)

Yea Wetlands October 2013

Bird List for Yea Wetlands		
Wood duck	Bell miner	Chestnut teal
Australian grebe	Kookaburra	Pied currawong
Rufous whistler	Little black cormorant	Superb fairy-wren
Red browed finch	Brown thornbill	White browed scrub-wren
Grey fantail	Sacred kingfisher	Spotted pardalote
Sulphur crested cockatoo	Fantail cuckoo	Yellow robin
Striated pardalote	Yellow faced honeyeater	Australian raven
Silvereye	Magpie	White necked heron
Crimson rosella	Black duck	Darter
New Holland honeyeater	Grey shrike-thrush	Dusky moorhen
Brown (?) quail	Yellow billed spoonbill	White throated treecreeper
Blackbird		34 species
Bird List for Seymour Bushland Reserve		
Rufous whistler	Spotted pardalote	Grey shrike-thrush
Grey fantail	Superb fairy-wren	Striated pardalote
White winged chough	Sulphur crested cockatoo	Flame robin
Weebill	Brown gerygone	Yellow faced honeyeater
Brown flycatcher	Crimson rosella	Buff rumped thornbill
		15 species
Orchid List for Seymour Bushland Reserve		
<i>Calochilus robertsonii</i>	Purple Beard Orchid	
<i>Caladenia gracilis</i>	Musky Caladenia	
<i>Thelymitra media</i>	Tall Sun Orchid	
<i>Thelymitra nuda</i>	Scented Su Orchid	
<i>Thelymitra rubra</i>	Salmon Sun Orchid	
		5 species



NATURE NOTES (CONT)

Lake Mountain March 2014 - BIRD LIST

Australian Hobby	Grey Currawong
Crimson Rosella	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
White-throated Treecreeper	Grey Shrike-thrush
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Olive Whistler
White-eared Honeyeater	Golden Whistler
Superb Lyrebird	Rufous Whistler
Spotted Pardalote	Grey Fantail
White-browed Scrub-wren	Little Raven
Brown Thornbill	Flame Robin
Striated Thornbill	Silvereye
Pied Currawong	Rufous Fantail
	22 species

Family : *Orchidaceae*
Scientific Name : *Sarcochilus australis*
Common Name : Butterfly orchid
Height : Epiphyte - usually
below 3m



Photographs Judith Cooke, Club field trip Morwell SP 16 November 2013

Habitat : Epiphytic on trees and shrubs in fern gullies and rainforest pockets.

Description : Plant consists of a cluster of flat pale green leaves up to 80mm long, from which are suspended up to 6 hanging racemes each bearing up to 18 flowers. Flowers are 15mm across, yellowish-green to brown, with the central labellum conspicuous white, with bright pink stripes. Roots are conspicuous and often the easiest way to spot a plant. They are whitish and extend along branches of the host shrub for up to 2 metres from the orchid. The plants may be found on a variety of hosts in the Park including, *Pittosporum undulatum*, *Coprosma quadrifida*, *Pomaderris aspera*, *Olearia argophylla*, *Rapanea howittiana*, *Cassinia longifolia*.

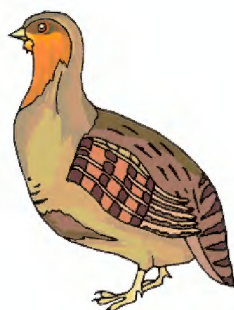
Distribution : Common in the Park, but confined to a 900 metre stretch of Fosters Gully running North-South as far as Lyndons Clearing.

Flowering Season : Nov-Dec

NATURE NOTES (CONT)

Point Cook January 2014 - BIRD LIST

Black Swan	Singing Honeyeater
Grey Teal	White-plumed Honeyeater
Chestnut Teal	Red Wattlebird
Brown Quail	White-fronted Chat
Little Black Cormorant	New Holland Honeyeater
Great Cormorant	Brown Thornbill
Pied Cormorant	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Little Pied Cormorant	Yellow Thornbill
White-faced Heron	Australian Magpie
White-faced Heron	Rufous Whistler
Black-shouldered Kite	Willie-wagtail
Swamp Harrier	Magpie-lark
Spotted Harrier	Little Raven
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	Eurasian Skylark
Masked Lapwing	Welcome Swallow
Red-capped Plover	Tree Martin
Red-necked Stint	Golden-headed Cisticola
Silver Gull	Silver-eye
Pacific Gull	Common Blackbird
Crested Tern	Singing Honeyeater
Spotted Dove	Common Starling
Peaceful Dove	Australasian Pipit
Crested Pigeon	Common Greenfinch
Brown Falcon	European Goldfinch
Galah	House Sparrow
Superb Fairywren	49 species



NATURE NOTES (CONT)

F J C Rogers Reserve is located between Heathmont Railway Station and Campbell Street in Heathmont (Melway ref. 50 A12).

The reserve occupies approximately 1 ha (2.5 acres) and is fenced off with no formal paths. However, as it is a very narrow strip of land, all plants are easily visible from either the railway path or Campbell Street. In the late 1960s, the then Ringwood Council obtained a 99-year lease on the land.

The reserve is named after Fred Rogers, a local school principal and Foundation Member of the Ringwood Field Naturalists Club who resided in the area and was instrumental in the development of the land into a bushland reserve for the preservation of native Australian plants. He donated many of the plants, initially plants from all over Australia. Several of those species as well as weeds that invaded from surrounding areas soon outcompeted local indigenous plants, which led to the loss of some indigenous species in the reserve.

As a result, the focus shifted to replanting using local indigenous plants, with the aim of restoring the original bushland composition.

F J C Rogers Reserve has been classified as vegetation type Valley Heathy Forest.



Judith Cooke

NATURE NOTES (CONT)

Western Australian Christmas Tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*) flowers in the Australian Garden, Cranbourne



Photograph Judith Cooke

Flowering this week (Dec. 2013) is the incredibly well-timed *Nuytsia floribunda* (Western Australian Christmas Tree) at Cranbourne Gardens. This plant from south-west Western Australia is a member of the Mistletoe family but unlike most other species in this family, it develops its own root system in the soil. The root system parasitizes the roots of other plants nearby rather than attaching to the branches of host plants.

It can reach up to 10 metres in height but is extremely difficult to grow to maturity and, as a result, is very rare in cultivation. Thanks to years of patient dedication from Cranbourne Gardens' Curator of Horticulture, Warren, the Australian Garden's tree is the most southerly growing specimen in the world.



Dates for your Diary

- SEANA Weekend Marysville 1-2 May 2014 – Upper Goulburn FNC

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